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REMARKS

Claims 20-24, as amended, remain herein. Claims 1-7 and 14-16 have been cancelled, and claims 8-13 and 17-19 have been withdrawn from further consideration.

Claim 23 has been indicated to contain allowable subject matter.

1. Applicants have amended the Abstract and page 1 of the specification as suggested by the Examiner. Corrections have also been made to pages 36 and 40.

2. Claims 20-24 were rejected under §112, second paragraph. All of claims 20-24 have been amended either to incorporate the changes suggested by the Examiner or to clarify the phrases which the Examiner deemed unclear. Claim 23 has been amended to depend from claim 22 rather than claim 20, and the radial direction is now recited as relative to the axis of rotation of the fan. Claim 24 also has been rewritten in independent form.

Claims 20-24 are now in compliance with §112, second paragraph. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully solicited.

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3. Claim 20 was rejected under §102 over Otsuka U.S. Patent 5,707,205, Starnes U.S. Patent 5,407,324, Wang U.S. Patent 5,583,746, or Thomas U.S. Patent 5,288,203.

Claim 21 was rejected under §102 over Otsuka.

Claim 22 was rejected under §103(a) over Otsuka in view of Wang, and claim 24 was rejected under §103(a) over Otsuka in view of the admitted prior art (APA).

Independent claim 20 has been amended to clarify the arrangement of the spacers as shown in Figs. 27a-c. In this embodiment, eight spacers are provided. Four of the spacers are spacers 23a and four of the spacers are 23b. The four spacers 23a and the two spacers 23b at the top right and lower left corners of the housing annular wall are parallel. That is, six of the eight spacers are parallel and are arranged in a transverse cross section relative to the longitudinal axis of the fan.

Thus, claim 20 has been amended to clarify the transverse arrangement of the parallel spacers. In the embodiment of Figs. 27a-c, n is equal to eight and $n-2$ is equal to six. The six spacers noted above are like the parallel spacers recited in the

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claim, with these six spacers in a transverse cross section relative to the axis.

Such an arrangement of the spacers simplifies the molding formation of the housing 17 as described in the paragraph bridging pages 35 and 36 of the specification. If all of the spacers were arranged in the radial direction, a more complex mold assembly comprising four slide cores would be required, as described at page 36, lines 4-12 of applicants' specification.

None of Otsuka, Starnes, Wang or Thomas or Applicants' admitted prior art (APA) discloses or suggests the spacer arrangement defined in amended claim 20. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of amended claims 20-22 and 24 under §102 and §103 are requested.

Should the Examiner deem that any further amendments would be desirable in placing this application in even better condition for issue, he is invited to telephone applicant's undersigned representative.

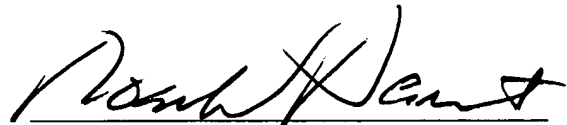
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Allowance of claims 20-24 is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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December 8, 2003
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Attorney Docket No.: YMOR:089B

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